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LB 440, 759

in mind is the fact that with this tobacco fund settlement nationally, and Nebraska is one of the few that's kept its word realistically, at least, in supporting health issues and so forth and so on, but no direct money probably could be stated that goes to smoking cessation in that \$49 million that we're spending now. Other states have gone to a great degree away from what they should be doing with it, in my opinion. They've bonded against it for about every other reason. But I believe that we ought to have at least some of that money going for this kind of commitment. And I'm concerned that in the long run, whatever that may be, maybe only a few years, there will be an effort to...at the national level to go back on that agreement, because states have misused so badly those commitments that were supposed to be made in that cigarette tax settlement. So I think we have two good reasons to continue this, and all of them benefit the state of Nebraska and the programs that we have thus far had. And I would urge strong consideration of this. It's fairly modest in terms of 3 cents. It is raising the cigarette tax, but it is fairly modest. I don't think it will cause a lot of border bleeding grief considering that Iowa I am sure is very, maybe Senator Jensen will know, but I think Iowa has gone ahead and raised theirs. I think we ought to consider doing this and at least make some good faith effort to promote smoking cessation. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Bourne, followed by Senator Jensen and others.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I appreciate what Senator Bromm is trying to do, but I don't support this amendment. I think that this is the wrong approach for a number of reasons. We just earlier today, earlier this day, I believe, when we had LB 440 and that was Senator Thompson's bill to, basically, eliminate the Municipal Infrastructure Redevelopment Fund, and that's \$3 million that went to our communities. And we got rid of that and we put that money in our General Fund. And Senator Bromm can correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe a 3 cent additional tax on cigarettes equals about \$3 million a year. It might be slightly less than that. But what I'm suggesting is that earlier today I did something that I really struggled with. We took a lot of money